



**THE COUNCIL
CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS
MARION COUNTY**

ALI BROWN
Councillor, District 5

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For Immediate Release

**COUNCILLOR, MAYOR ANNOUNCE BROAD INITIATIVE TO MAKE INDY
“SAFEST CITY IN THE COUNTRY” FOR THOSE WITH ASD**

Indianapolis—Indianapolis City-County Councillor Ali Brown (District 5) joined Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett, IMPD Chief Randal Taylor, and other city leaders and partners today to announce the Indy Autism Project, a broad initiative aimed at making Indianapolis the safest city in the country for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to live, work, and play. The announcement took place at Lucas Oil Stadium, a certified sensory-inclusive venue for individuals with autism, dementia, PTSD, and similar sensory-sensitive conditions.

“Today, 1 in every 46 children are diagnosed somewhere on the autism spectrum,” Brown said, “My son is one of those children. He’s a bright, happy kid who just experiences the world differently. I want for him what all parents want for their children: safety, opportunity, the chance to pursue happiness. I believe Indianapolis can be the safest city in the country for him, for all people with ASD, and others who are not neurotypical.”

Speaking at the event, Mayor Hogsett agreed. “Since the 1840s, when schools for the blind and for the deaf were founded here in Indianapolis, our city has been a trailblazer when it comes to accessibility,” said Mayor Hogsett. “Certification under the Indy Autism Project will allow Indianapolis to extend that tradition to residents and visitors with Autism Spectrum Disorder, as well as their families and caretakers. The City of Indianapolis stands proudly with all of today’s partners to make our home a better place for residents with ASD to live, work, and play.”

Brown and Hogsett were joined by IMPD Chief Randal Taylor and representatives from Indy Parks, IndyGo, Visit Indy, Indy Chamber, Lucas Oil Stadium, and Easter Seals Crossroads. The partners announced their intention to seek accreditation as an Autism Certified City by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards, widely considered the gold standard of such certifications. The effort is beginning with a focus on five “pillars”: public safety, public transit, parks & recreation, employment/workforce development, and hospitality/tourism. Staff across the five pillars will receive training and resources to support safe, productive, positive interactions with individuals on the spectrum or others who are neurodiverse.

This evening, the Indianapolis City-County Council will take up a special resolution that “commits the City of Indianapolis and Marion County to working toward becoming the safest place for someone on the Autism Spectrum to live, work and visit”. The proposal is co-sponsored by all 25 members of the Council.

Council President Vop Osili said he's very pleased to see the entire Council come together to support Brown's initiative. "Councillor Brown's initiative is an opportunity to weave an understanding of the gifts and needs of those living with ASD into the culture of our community," Osili said, "and to empathize in a way that I believe benefits us all."

Majority Leader Maggie Lewis agreed, saying "I commend Councillor Brown for her work with the Indy Autism Project. Through her efforts and the numerous partners who are involved, adults and children living with autism will have unprecedented resources available to them throughout our entire city. The Indy Autism Project shines a light on this important need and highlights our commitment to create a city that is welcoming to all."

To learn more about the Indianapolis Autism Project, visit www.indyautismproject.com.

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